

AMERICA and the War on Terrorism

In December the Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force announced decreases in the numbers of reservists on active duty in support of the partial mobilization, while the Army announced increases. At press time, 25,368 Army National Guard and Army Reserve soldiers were on active duty in support of the mobilization. The number of reserve-component personnel from all services was 50,825, including both units and individual augmentees.

Recapping American antiterrorist activities as of the end of 2002, Homeland Security Adviser Tom Ridge said the military had disrupted al Qaeda training facilities in Afghanistan, and U.S. forces were working with local counterterrorism forces in Yemen and the Philippines. The international coalition had frozen \$125 million worth of assets and disrupted terrorist activity in Spain, Italy and Germany. About 2,700 terrorists or supporters were in custody.

Even as soldiers from the French army began training the 6th Battalion of the Afghan National Army in December, U.S. special forces soldiers were inprocessing the first members of the 7th Bn. (the French train the even-numbered Afghan battalions while U.S. forces train the odd-numbered units). A special forces spokesman said training for the 7th Bn. will begin when the unit has recruited at least 300 men.

In early December Al Qaeda and Taliban sympathizers launched two hit-and-run attacks on U.S. forces in Afghanistan, and a B-52 Stratofortress dropped precision-guided munitions in support of special-operations forces that came under attack near the border with Iran. U.S. officials stressed that these and many similar incidents in December illustrated the dangers U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan still face.

The Army continued to remove Stop-Loss restrictions for selected MOSs, including specialties in intelligence, field artillery and air-defense artillery. However, another Stop-Loss measure keeps mobilized Reserve and National Guard soldiers in the Army until at least 90 days after their units demobilize. The measure was enacted to keep mobilized reserve-component members from departing the Army at the end of their enlistments but in the middle of a unit's a missions, officials said.

SPC Patrick Tharpe



Soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division's 1st Battalion, 504th Infantry, search a bazaar in the village of Yehya Khel, Afghanistan, for al Qaeda members and possible weapons caches.

Members of the 705th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company from Fort Polk, La., detonate ordnance found in an Afghan village near Bagram Airfield during Operation Kofi Sofi.

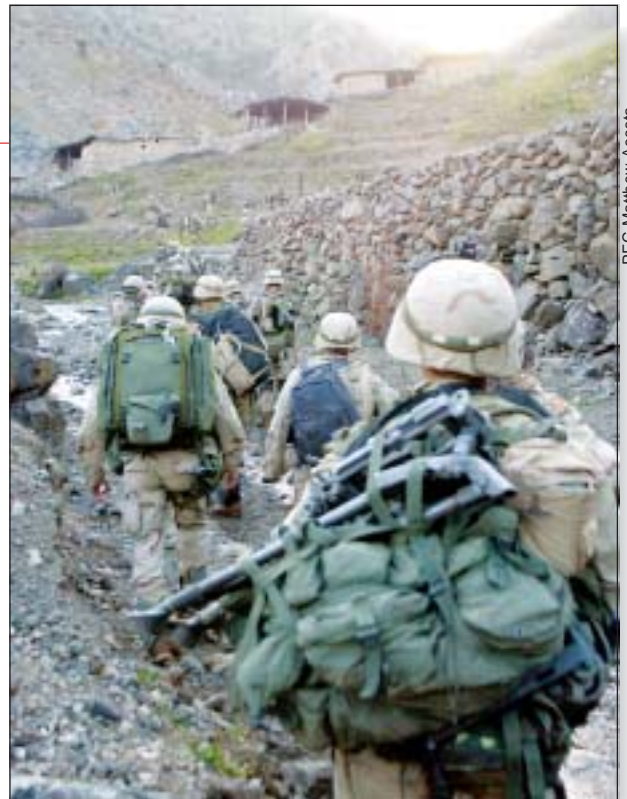
SGT Albert Eaddy





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The ordnance found during Operation Kofi Sofi is wired for detonation. Among the explosives found were mortar shells and rocket-propelled grenades.



PFC Matthew Acosta

Soldiers of the 82nd Abn. Div.'s 505th Inf. approach a suspected enemy position during Operation Alamo Sweep.



SGT Angelica Harris

LTC Tim O'Hara, commander of the 405th Civil Affairs Bn. from Riverdale, Md., gives balloons to students during his unit's visit to a girl's school near Bagram.



Secretary of the Army Thomas E. White and Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.), joined by members of the Carlisle community, shovel dirt during the groundbreaking ceremony.

SSG Marcia T. Hart

Carlisle, Pa.

Heritage Center Construction Begins

THE ceremonial groundbreaking for the Army Heritage and Education Center took place in November. Secretary of the Army Thomas E. White and Pennsylvania's senior senator, Arlen Specter, attended the ceremony.

Being constructed on a 56-acre site, the center is a joint effort of the Department of the Army, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Military Heritage Foundation, and will tell the Army story through museum displays, archives, interpretive history and unit memorials. The USAHEC will be home for the U.S. Army Military History Institute and the Army Heritage Museum, and the new facility will complement the National Museum of the United States

Army, to be constructed at Fort Belvoir, Va. — *Army News Service*

Washington

DOD Begins Smallpox Vaccination Program

THE Department of Defense announced in December it has begun mandatory smallpox vaccinations of military personnel.

Dr. William Winkenwerder, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, said immunizations started Dec. 12 and would continue "over the next weeks and months," concentrating initial immunizations on units with "high priority." He said National Guard and Reserve units would be added in the near future.

"We'll start with teams that would respond in the case of an attack, followed by military medical personnel, and then

certain forces that we believe would be important to carry out any missions in the near future," he said.

Although Winkenwerder would not confirm a specific threat against U.S. personnel, he did say the services need to be prepared now.

Smallpox is a highly contagious and sometimes-fatal disease for which there is no specific treatment. The disease kills about 30 percent of all people infected, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Currently, the only preventive measure against the disease is the vaccine. — *American Forces Information Service*

Washington

New TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy Opens

MORE than 400,000 military pharmacy mail-order custom-

ers will be switched March 1 to a new TRICARE mail-order Pharmacy program, said COL William D. Davies of the TRICARE Management Activity in Falls Church, Va.

Current services will continue under the National Mail-Order Pharmacy contract until Feb. 28, and the next day, March 1, Express Scripts Inc. will provide services under the new program, Davies said.

Those beneficiaries who have refills remaining on existing prescriptions will be transferred to Express Scripts so they can continue ordering medications on time, with some exceptions.

"We can't transfer narcotics or other controlled substance prescriptions. Nor can we transfer compounded prescriptions — those that are prepared by the pharmacy," said Davies, who is the director of DOD pharmacy programs.

TRICARE beneficiaries living and working overseas who have APO, FPO or U.S. embassy addresses can use the mail-order pharmacy for prescriptions that don't require priority handling. But the prescription must be written by a provider licensed to practice in the United States.

Those eligible to use the current mail-order program or the retail benefit are eligible to use the new TRICARE mail-order program. New customers must register for the program. Information will be provided through the TRICARE service centers, military treatment facilities pharmacies and their marketing points of contact. For more information, including a complete section on the co-pay structure, visit www.tricare.osd.mil.

Beneficiaries may also use the Express Scripts Web site by clicking on the Defense Department seal at

www.express-scripts.com.
— AFIS

Washington

Stopping the Identity Thieves

MEMBERS of the Army family now have a tool to stop cons who prey on military personnel. DOD and the Federal Trade Commission have created "Military Sentinel," a Web site to help expose those who seek to steal identities and set up telemarketing scams, fake sweepstakes and get-rich-quick schemes.

Military Sentinel allows members of the armed forces to enter consumer complaints directly into a database that is immediately accessible by more than 500 law-enforcement organizations throughout the United States, Canada and Australia. These agencies use the complaint data to target cases for prosecution and other enforcement measures.

The site will also provide DOD with the means to gauge consumer-protection issues facing the military community, said Assistant Secretary of Defense Charles Abell.

The site has valuable links

For more information,
visit the website:

www.consumer.gov/military

to frequently asked questions, off-limits businesses and consumer-information sites. For specific information related to each service, or to file a complaint, click on the appropriate service icon at the top of the web page. — ARNEWS

Arlington, Va.

Bush Authorizes New Guard CSTs

PRESIDENT George W. Bush has authorized the creation of 23 more full-time National Guard civil-support teams, one for each state and territory that does not already have one of the congressionally directed teams formed to help civil authorities respond to disasters caused by weapons of mass destruction.

The 23 additional teams, which will bring the total number to 55, are included in the 2003 National Defense

Authorization Act that Bush signed into law in December.

Each 22-member civil support team is trained and equipped to test the air, soil and water at a disaster site for chemical, biological and radiological agents and high-yield explosives that could endanger firefighters, police officers and other emergency responders and members of the public. Thirty-two full-time teams are now located in 31 states. California has two.

The law makes it possible for the remaining 19 states, three territories and the District of Columbia to field teams certified by the secretary of defense. The act gives the Department of Defense 180 days from the date it was signed to determine how the 23 new teams will be funded and how and when they will be staffed, equipped and trained.

The teams are qualified to conduct operations in and outside of their states as part of the National Guard's national-response plan. — *National Guard Bureau Public Affairs Office*

Budget News

Budget Funds Transformation, Pay Increase

THIS year's Defense Appropriation Bill and Authorization Act will fund pay increases for soldiers, a fourth Stryker brigade combat team and 650 Comanche helicopters.

Congress responded to the Army's request to close the pay gap between soldiers and the civilian sector with a target pay increase of 6.5 percent for mid- and senior-level NCOs, and a 5.5 percent increase for majors between eight and 14 years of service. *[See the pay chart on page 24 of this issue.]*

Army chief of Staff GEN Eric K. Shinseki has repeatedly said that the Army needs six Stryker brigade combat teams. Congress responded by authorizing \$788 million to purchase 322 Stryker vehicles, enough for a fourth brigade with an additional \$150.9 million for further research and development.

The Army's request to procure 819 RAH-66 Comanches was partially granted. Congress authorized \$910 million for development, while the Department of Defense has supported the procurement of 650 Comanches.

President George W. Bush signed the Defense Appropriations Bill, which is nearly \$335 billion, and the Military Construction Appropriations Bill, which adds \$10.5 billion for building and upgrading military installations and family housing, at the White House in October. The Defense Authorization Act was signed in December.

— ARNEWS

SFC Kathleen T. Rhem



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